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ABSTRACT

Adolescent pregnancy and childbearing rates remain higher in the United States than in most Western nations; more than 500,000 teenage girls have babies every year. As these teen parents mature, they have diminished educational and career expectations. A small number of programs directed toward the career needs of teenage parents was developed during the 1970s and 1980s; many more are needed. The trend is for these programs to share many of the same characteristics of dropout prevention programs. Specific career education components are included, such as assessment of aptitudes, career and vocational counseling, life skills development, preemployment preparation, and job development and placement. In addition, support services such as child care and transportation are provided. Characteristics of successful programs for teen parents include established sites that can provide services for nontraditional students, support and referral networks, and newsletters. Equity goals must be remembered when developers design programs for teen parents, and teens need to be encouraged to aspire to higher-wage jobs to support themselves and their children. However, gender-role biases need to be addressed. (This fact sheet provides information that can be used in developing programs for teen parents. It includes an annotated list of 14 print resources and addresses of 12 resource organizations that can be contacted for more information.) (KC)

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

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CAREER EDUCATION FOR TEEN PARENTS

Despite a general decline in the birthrate since 1970, rates of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing remain higher in the United States than in most western nations. Over 500,000 teenage girls have babies each year; most are unmarried and about half are not yet 18 years of age (Public/Private Ventures 1989). The trend is for these teen mothers to remain unmarried and to head their own households (Vetter 1988).

As these teen parents mature, they have diminished educational and career expectations. They face significant challenges in completing their high school education, pursuing postsecondary education, and entering the work force (Burge 1987; Lindner 1988). According to Lindner, "without intervention their education and employment opportunities are limited" (p. 8). Unquestionably, teen mothers are a subgroup of the population who can benefit from career education.

A small number of programs directed toward the career needs of teen parents were developed during the 1970s and 1980s (Burge 1987). The trend is for these programs to share many of the same characteristics of dropout prevention programs. Specific career education components in such programs are as follows: assessment and testing of skills, aptitudes, and interests; career and vocational counseling, including work experience; life skills development, including parenting and nutrition; basic skills, including study skills to help participants pursue further education or begin employment; preemployment preparation, including employability skills; and job development and placement, including mentoring and job shadowing (Lindner 1988). In addition, the following support services were provided: child care, transportation, networking, and referral to community services and agencies (ibid.).

Burge (1987) identifies the following as characteristics of successful programs for teen parents: established sites that can provide special services for nontraditional students; support and referral networks linking a variety of community agencies and services; and newsletters, an effective and expensive strategy for communicating with, educating, and supporting single parents.

Bitters (1988) points out the importance of keeping equity goals in mind when designing and implementing programs for teen parents. Because they have to provide for themselves and their children, teen parents need to consider higher wage/higher benefit jobs and careers. They must explore expanded role options and build equity skills because many of them will be the primary or sole provider for their child as well as the sole parent.

However, Bitters (1988) suggests that despite general heightened awareness about the changing roles of men and women in society, most young people need assistance in exploring the myths about gender roles. Teen parents, particularly, may need aid in resolving feelings about the opposite sex and how their life is different than they imagined it would be. Despite the emergence of programs for teen parents during the 1970s and 1980s, Burge (1987) points out that the number of teens served represents only a small proportion of those in need of services. Much more needs to be done in this area. This *Trends and Issues Alert* provides information that can be used in developing programs for teen parents. In addition to print resources, information is included about resource organizations that can be contacted for further information.

Print Resources

Bitters, B. "Teen Parents: Achieving Gender Equity." *Wisconsin Vocational Educator* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 6,17.

Explains why teen parents need to consider nontraditional and higher wage occupations.

Burge, P. *Career Development of Single Parents. Information Series no. 324.* Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 290 934).

Explores the nature of single parenthood, employment and other needs, examples of career development programs, and policy concerns.

Career Survival Kit for Teen Education and Employment. Madison: Vocational Studies Center, University of Wisconsin, 1987-1989. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 307 423 and ED 312 400-405).

Kit includes two resource directories, four student workbooks, a staff user guide, an occupations digest, and two videotapes.

FOCUS: A Life Skill and Career Development Program for Teens. Camden, NJ: Camden County Division of Health, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 295 059).

Goals are to increase economic self-sufficiency, explore nontraditional jobs, and improve life planning and parenting skills.

Kerka, S. *Single Parents: Career-Related Issues and Needs. Digest No. 75.* Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 296 123).

Concludes that job training and placement can only be effective in the long run if programmers consider the other needs of single parents.

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Lee, G., and Pinholster, R. *Vocational Teen Parenting (Adolescent Single Parents)*. Sebring, FL: Highlands County Schools, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 988).

Program focused on positive self-image and provided counseling, child care, clinic services, and job training.

Lindner, A. F. "Vocational Education: Empowering Teen Parents." *Wisconsin Vocational Educator* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 8, 17. (ERIC No. EJ 377 137).

Vocational education is an effective resource for teen parents because it emphasizes skills necessary for the transition to the work force or postsecondary education.

Polit, D. F.; Quint, J. C.; and Riccio, J. A. *The Challenge of Serving Teenage Mothers*. Miami: Dade County Public Schools, 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 299 444).

Project Redirection improved teen parents' education and employment outcomes, reduced welfare dependency, and provided a developmental advantage for their children.

Public/Private Ventures. *Teaching Life Skills in Context*. Philadelphia: P/PV, 1989. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 310 190).

The Summer Training and Education Program addresses teen parenting issues in an employment and training context.

Saravalli, S. K. *Teenage Pregnancy: Educational Programs to Promote Self-Sufficiency*. Columbus, Instructional Materials Lab, The Ohio State University, 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 301 752).

The Graduation Reality and Dual Role Skills program provides in-school vocational home economics instruction emphasizing healthy pregnancy, responsible parenting, and career development.

Teenage Parent Coping Skills. Owensboro, KY: Owensboro Public Schools, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 348).

Video-based coping skills project focused on parenting attitudes and skills, career awareness, and single parent role models.

Vetter, L. "Single Parents and Homemakers." In *Vocational Special Needs Learners*, edited by J. K. Ciccone and J. E. Friedenberg. Columbus, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 673).

Identifies comprehensive services needed by single parents; advocates national data collection efforts and funding allocation changes.

Volusia County Single Parents Program. Daytona Beach, FL: Volusia County Schools, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 049).

Dropout prevention through provision of financial assistance for day care; instruction in health, family living, and guidance; and career awareness information and assessment.

Whipple, V. *Career Orientation and Preparation for Teen Parents Curriculum*. Malta, IL: Kishwaukee College, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 283 566).

Focused on nontraditional occupations and local labor market trends; involved field trips to local job sites and use of the Self-Directed Search.

Resource Organizations

Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse, Children's Defense Fund, 122 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 (202/628-8787).

Alan Guttmacher Institute, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003 (212/254-5656).

Center for Population Options, 1012 14th Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20005 (202/347-5700).

Junior League of St. Louis Teen Outreach Program Network, 8346 Delcrest, St. Louis, MO 63124 (314/872-1960).

Mott Foundation Too-Early Childbearing Network, 1200 Mott Foundation Bldg., Flint, MI 48502 (313/238-5651).

National Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting, P.O. Box 2365, Reston, VA 22090 (703/435-3948).

National Urban League Affiliate Development of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs Network, 500 East 62nd Street, New York, NY 10021 (212/310-9000).

Office of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 725-H, Washington, DC 20201.

Support Center for Educational Equity for Young Mothers, School Services Division, Academy for Educational Development, 680 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019 (212/397-0040).

Teen Fathers Collaboration, Bank Street College, 610 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10025 (212/663-7200).

Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Project, Women's Action Alliance, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212/532-8330).

Wider Opportunities for Women, 1325 G Street, NW, Lower Level, Washington, DC 20005 (202/638-3143).

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